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ABSTRACT

The document examines Western political thought in terms of women's and men's expected spheres of concern, the proper male and female nature, and the sex-specific allocation of social values. In addition, the author applies her conclusions to contemporary political issues in the United States. Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Rousseau, and Hegel made a public/private distinction between sex roles. Sex discrimination was explicit to their political theories. Montesquieu, Locke, and Kant granted women more political or domestic powers than did this first group. Machiavelli, Burke, and Arendt made distinctions between private and public matters in their political treatises, but they did not explicitly relegate women to the private sphere. In fact, they largely ignored women altogether. Four philosophers argued to some degree for the sex-neutral assignment of public and private tasks: Plato, Hobbes, Mill, and Marx. An irony in the works of many of these philosophers who considered women to be inferior is that their ideology generally regarded equality and freedom as important values. Four principles of justice emerge from linking the rendering of justice to a view of either unequal or equal abilities in terms of sex: distributive or proportionate justice, numerical justice, pragmatic or utilitarian justice, and redistributive or corrective justice. All four forms of justice are relevant in interpreting present governmental decisions in the United States vis-a-vis women. (Author/KC)

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SEXISM IN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ITS REFUTATION:

A SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW

SO 012 933

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SEXISM IN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ITS REFUTATION: A SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW

Since its beginning in classical Athens political philosophy has contained the sexist assumption that women are fundamentally different from, and inferior to, men. In recent publications aspects of this sexism have been criticized from the feminist belief that women are basically equal to men and that the few sexual differences do not warrant an inferior female status. Some of this feminist scholarship has focused on the treatment of women by a few philosophers whose sexism or egalitarianism occupied a prominent part in their writings,[1] while other feminist research has examined specific sexist assumptions which persisted over several historical periods.[2] But we are unaware of any attempt to review all the major representatives of the political-philosophical tradition, to look for consistent patterns in their views of women, and to summarize the arguments in favor of feminism.[3] Thus contemporary teachers and interpreters of past political thought have little guidance on how to integrate their subject matter with the present trend toward sex equality. This paper suggests ways to fill this gap. In addition, we wish to show that our proposed framework can also be applied to the analysis of sexism in contemporary

political decisions.

In our opinion three distinctions are useful in analyzing sex bias in the major political theories that have come, as of today, to represent the heritage of Western political thought: (1) Women's and men's expected spheres of concern, (2) the proper female and male nature, and (3) the sex-specific allocation of social values. A section will focus on each of these three aspects of social channeling, but they will also be discussed within each section if this appears preferable to preserve their logical unity. The sexist assumptions will be refuted (1) by presenting the arguments of philosophers who advocated women's equality, (2) by pointing out internal contradictions within the works of political theorists, and (3) by highlighting incompatibilities of conservative non-egalitarian with egalitarian liberal-feminist and socialist-feminist value preferences. Some of these refutations will appear throughout the text, while others will be presented more systematically at the end of each section. The application of our framework to contemporary political issues in the United States will conclude this paper.

First Assumption: Sex-Segregation of Public and Private Tasks

A fundamental conceptual means of determining women's proper sphere of concern in theories of politics has been the bifurcation of social life into public versus private arenas, on the one hand, and supervisory versus supervised work, on the other hand. Most political philosophers argued that men should be in charge of the political realm and supervise the management of the domestic sphere. Women were to take care of the on-going daily work in the home and the

nitty-gritty child rearing tasks. Theorists differed as to the extent to which they made sex-segregation of public and private tasks explicit and granted men absolute power over the household.

Among the fifteen philosophers who will be considered in this paper, Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Rousseau, and Hegel form one group. (See table at the end of this section.) They made the public/private distinction together with sex discrimination an explicit part of their political theories, and they thought that husbands should have unrestricted authority in the private sphere--unrestricted in the sense of "no legal constraints," which, however, did not preclude moral constraints. As will be explicated, these thinkers used a variety of philosophical arguments to support their preferences, including appeals to natural law, theology, ethics, pragmatism, and tradition; and above all, they based their choices on supposed differences between the male and female nature.

According to Aristotle, the city state was the primary social and political community composed, in turn, of subordinate family units. In the private realm, where labor was thought to be animalistic, the male dealt with the necessities of life, especially procreation and economic management. By employing his wife and slaves, the man was to master these needs so that he would have the leisure to participate in the more honorable public sphere.[4] This hierarchical division of labor was seen not as exploitative but as functional; it enabled people to develop and use their inherently unequal natural abilities. "Nature" for Aristotle meant telos and the actualization of one's potential.[5] Free men had the capacity for excellence, virtue, communal spirit, and rationality. To actualize these capabilities

they needed to obtain proper training and enter the public sphere. Women's rational and moral capabilities were more limited. First of all, the conception of a girl was thought to be the result of a biological deficiency. The adult female was wanting in that she contributed only inferior, mortal, passive matter to the creation of the offspring, whereas the male supplied the superior, more divine, active form or soul.[6] The woman was just intelligent and virtuous enough to quietly obey her husband's rules concerning household management. As a domestic worker and affectionate mother of future citizens, she would contribute that share to the community to which her nature was best suited.[7]

With his political writing Cicero hoped to stop the decline of the Roman Republic. In De re publica he implored his fellow citizens to eschew the search for mundane pleasure and personal advantage in favor of noble action in defense of the commonwealth. State interests should precede family concerns: The cultivation of justice and loyalty "is a noble spirit when shown towards parents and kindred, but noblest when shown towards your country."[8] Reflecting his times' treatment of women, Cicero addressed his plea for political involvement only to men. He believed in the distinction between the private and public spheres of life, the home being the foundation of the state and a training ground for public affairs.[9] Cicero did not further elaborate on the functions of the home in his major political works. From the few remarks on the family and women, however, it becomes clear that he was firmly committed to the institution of the monogamous and patriarchal marriage which would ensure legitimate children and the

control of wives by their husbands.[10] Since nature had created strong and weak people, it was just and in the interest of the latter that they should be ruled by the stronger.[11]

In keeping with the complex political situation of his time, Aquinas avoided the simple distinction between public and private spheres in his political theory. Instead, he described society in terms of a multi-level hierarchy--household, community, province, kingdom, and finally the Church. The purpose of the household was to provide for the elementary necessities like nutrition and procreation. In this realm the woman was useful for her maternal role:

> It was absolutely necessary to make woman, for the reason Scripture mentions, as a help for man; not indeed to help him in any other work, as some have maintained, because where most work is concerned man can get help more conveniently from another man than from a woman; but to help him in the work of procreation.[12]

Following Aristotle's theory of conception, Aquinas described the procreation of a female as a deformity, a deviation from perfect manhood. He also echoed Aristotle's teaching that the woman's body did not actively contribute to procreation, but simply furnished an inert container.[13] Since man was the spiritual and active principle and woman the material and passive one, the husband could demand respect from his wife. "Such is the subjection in which woman is by nature subordinate to man, because the power of rational discernment is by nature stronger in man."[14] In Thomist philosophy the family was not self-sufficient. For life-sustaining necessities and mutual support people lived in communities. Aquinas mentioned two more reasons why communal living was advantageous. Reflecting Aristotelian influence,

he regarded every man as a social and political animal that needed the group for self-realization. And from a Christian standpoint man also needed the community to keep him virtuous and God-fearing.[15]

Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas belong to the classical conservative tradition which regards it in the nature of things to relegate whole social groups, such as slaves, heathens or women to a permanently inferior position. Thus these philosophers cannot be accused of ideological inconsistency. Rousseau, on the other hand, belongs to the Enlightenment which favors egalitarianism and individualism as the more natural and rational state of affairs. Within such an ideological framework his treatment of women as inferior is incongruent. In addition, Rousseau can be criticized for logical inconsistency. In the Origin of Inequality among Mankind he starts out by describing human life in a primitive state of nature. Men and women freely roamed the forests and plains, without any care for their future or for each other. The first principle of human action was self-preservation and the second one a natural aversion to seeing other people suffer. The latter accounted for the mother's concern for her infant. Rousseau's reasoning implies that women in the primordial state had survival skills so superior to those of men that they managed to take care not only of themselves, but also of their children.[16] But this earlier superiority does not earn them a respectable place in Rousseau's civil society. He omits women from the union of all wills and assigns them an inferior position. He tries to promote a political order that would restore as much liberty and equality as possible among men. Women were to continue obeying men.[17]

From the Dedication to the Origin of Inequality we learn what he expects from the "precious half of the republic," the "amiable and virtuous daughters of Geneva." By being chaste, tender, prudent, tranquil, innocent, and beautiful, women were to make honorable citizens out of their husbands. But such influence should only be exercised "within the limits of conjugal union"; men are warned against the negative effects of association with "loose women."[18] In the Social Contract Rousseau ignores women altogether. He declares man's first law to be the pursuit of his own preservation and his first cares directed toward himself, thus neglecting the altruism involved in child rearing, which, as previously mentioned, he acknowledged in the Origin of Inequality. When considering offspring, the philosopher refers only to the relationship between fathers and children, as if mothers did not exist.[19]

In the Philosophy of Right Hegel expands the public/private duality of his intellectual predecessors to a triad--the family, the civil society, and the state. He arrives at this extension by combining the modern utilitarian concept of government and the Aristotelian functional view of the public/private spheres with his own metaphysical interpretation of the ethical-spiritual aspects of life. The family, held together by love, is the primary spiritual union among people. The unity manifests itself by the fact that family members recognize themselves not as individuals but as members of the family group, and that action within the family is motivated by the desire to provide for the well-being of the family as a whole.[20] Opposing Kant, who will be discussed below, Hegel argues that because of its spiritual origin and altruistic dimension, the marriage bond cannot, and should

not, be regulated by contract.[21] Different, but complementary duties have been assigned to the spouses in some rational-ethical metaphysical realm; the marriage partners can know their respective allotment from intuition, ethical awareness, and the different female and male characteristics in the physical realm. In Hegel's words:

> 165. The difference in the physical characteristics of the two sexes has a rational basis and consequently acquires an intellectual and ethical significance . . . .
>
> 166. . . . . In relation to externality, the former [sex] is powerful and active, the latter passive and subjective. It follows that man has his actual substantive life in the state, in learning, and so forth, as well as in labour and struggle with the external world and with himself so that it is only out of his diremption that he fights his way to self-subsistent unity with himself. In the family he has a tranquil intuition of this unity, and there he lives a subjective ethical life on the plane of feeling. Woman, on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family, and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mine.[22]
> (emphasis added)

Since man is active and powerful, it follows that the husband should be the head of the household; as such he is ethically required to control the property of the family and represent it in the civil society. The woman is ethically required to preserve the family bonds; she tends the household gods, protects the ethical ties to the ancestors, and prepares coming generations for their roles.[23] Since woman's destiny lies in the family, she can be ignored in the discussion of the civil society which is the sphere of man's work, property acquisition, competitive individuality, and regulatory institutions. In the discussion of the state, even man as physical, self-interested being dissipates. By transcending his personal goals, he becomes conscious of his universality; and as a conscious being he

knows and wills the universal interest of society and partakes in the freedom which the state as a self-dependent organism provides.[24]

Some political thinkers, especially Montesquieu, Locke, and Kant, cannot be included in this first group of philosophers because they granted women more political or domestic powers. Montesquieu thought that women were suitable as sovereigns. Since women were more lenient and temperate than men, they might be more desirable rulers, as they were less inclined to become tyrants. Montesquieu did not apply the same reasoning to the household; men were to retain the final authority in domestic affairs.[25]

Locke ignored women in politics, but he argued in favor of a marriage contract which would assign both spouses more or less equal decision-making responsibility in the home. Only when the couple could not reach an agreement should the husband's word prevail because of man's superior nature, an argument that will be further explored in the next section.[26]

Kant based his political theory on the public/private dichotomy with women relegated entirely to the latter sphere. As political order he favored constitutional democracy. Sovereignty and the final authority to rule were to rest in the legislative power, which belonged to the representatives of the united body of citizens.[27] Entitlement to active citizenship and the franchise were, however, limited. Among the requirements for the voting right Kant mentioned "civil independence" by which he meant legal and material autonomy. Together with all those men who contracted their labor with a private person, such as journeymen,

servants, and tutors, women had to rely on some other private individual, such as father or husband, for their sustenance and protection. Therefore they were civilly dependent and only passive citizens.[28]

The rule of law should also prevail in the home; a marriage contract was to delineate the spouses' rights and duties. Like Locke, Kant assumed a certain degree of equality in domestic affairs; each partner was to have the same right to the family property and to the other's body for sexual gratification. But, Kant went on to say, this kind of equality did not contradict the law which stipulated that the husband ought to command and the wife obey. Since man was, by nature, more capable of looking after the common interests of the family, he should have the final authority. This hierarchy was, in Kant's opinion, actually to the woman's advantage since the objective of the household, of which she was an equal beneficiary, was best met through the patriarchal order.[29] This argument is based on the principle of distributive justice--a concept that will be discussed in greater detail in the third section. It justifies the unequal allocation of social values by assuming innate inequalities among people. But, in Kant's view, the resulting "inequality in freedom," which his marriage contract stipulated, would be more than counterbalanced by the "equality in benefits."[30]

Machiavelli, Burke, and Arendt also made distinctions between public and private matters in their political treatises, but they did not explicitly relegate women to the private sphere. As a matter of fact, they pretty much ignored them altogether. Let us look in greater

detail at Arendt's treatment of women since she is a contemporary and a woman. In the Human Condition, her most important philosophical work, she uses the public versus private dichotomy as a cornerstone for explicating her understanding of superior and inferior activities.[31] The public sphere is the arena for action, assertion of freedom, and human elevation. The private sphere is the arena for work and labor.[32] What does Arendt mean by these terms? The action category subsumes, beyond speech and deeds, such items as jurisdiction, defense, and administration of public affairs.[33] The work category includes the unique creations of craftsmen. People who are brought together to mass-produce such creations are laborers. Also subsumed under the labor category are those people whose tasks include all the repetitive, but necessary, chores which sustain and reproduce life.[34] Obviously, housewives fall in the last group. Arendt seems to imply that women in general cannot transcend the life of laborers, since in her elucidation of action as the preferable human condition she refers only to men. Women are mentioned only four times in the Human Condition and then only with respect to their reproductive functions.[35]

After the review of those theorists who in one way or another distinguished between men's and women's responsibilities, we will now proceed to look at four philosophers who to some degree argued for the sex-neutral assignment of public and private tasks. They are Plato, Hobbes, Mill, and Marx. Actually, the arguments of the last two thinkers will be combined with a liberal and socialist

critique of conservative sexism at the end of this section.

Plato's treatment of women is complex, and only the most controversial aspects from the Republic can find attention here. In book V of that work he envisioned the just state as one in which all citizens, male and female, would hold that occupation through which they could contribute their best talent to the community. More specifically, people would be assigned roles according to their intellectual, moral, and manual abilities either in the public (political) or private (familial and economic) realm. The most intelligent, ethical, and civic-minded persons would form the class of rulers and warriors; they were to occupy the public space and be completely exempt from private commodity production and family ties. To ensure complete devotion to their public duties, guardians were not to own "any private property beyond the barest necessities" and no house "that is not open for all to enter at will."[36]

Unusual for his time, Plato included women as potential political leaders in the ideal state. By insisting that the supreme public power should rest not only on physical strength, but above all on civic-mindedness, Plato made it possible for women to compete with men for the highest office in the state.[37] Women in general, he admitted, were inferior to men, but experience had shown that some women were better than some men. Therefore, each woman should be judged on her own merits, and if a superior woman came along, she should be preferred to inferior men. Since the rearing of one's own children would contradict the public nature of the guardian's life, Plato suggested special institutional arrangements for children born to this class.[38] Outside

of the ideal state, Plato expresses little faith in women's capabilities. For instance, to warn against behavior that is uncomely to noble men, he mentions attitudes supposedly typical of women, children, slaves, and old and low men, such as pettiness, excitability, or secretiveness.[39]

Plato's contradictory treatment of women in the Republic has attracted diverse interpretations in recent years. Although admitting his misogynistic tendencies, some scholars regard him as a woman's advocate because he did not unequivocally assign a specific sphere of concern and distinct nature to women. On the other hand, the Straussian method of reading between the lines has resulted in the speculation that Plato was not at all interested in the status of women per se. Instead, he supposedly used the woman's issue to exemplify the impossibility of a perfectly just city. By abstracting from the human body, ignoring physical differences, and adapting female life styles to male ones, Plato, by this reading, denied women the chance to contribute to the community that talent which they possessed to a greater degree than men, namely child rearing.[40]

Using historical class distinctions in Athens as a basis for analysis, one can argue that Plato both derided and respected women because he had different social groups in mind. In some societies, upper-class women could enjoy a considerable amount of freedom, respect, and political power. Classical Athens was not such a community. However, Plato may have wished that it were while observing the political developments in his state: Merchants were increasing their political power at the expense of the aristocracy. To counter their influence,

Plato, a member of the old nobility, may have envisioned curtailing their ascent by expanding the power of "worthy" (i.e., aristocratic) women. His liberation of guardian women from child rearing responsibilities in the ideal state also becomes more plausible when taking the actual historical conditions into consideration. Wealthy women in Athens had wet-nurses and servants, and may not have regarded child care as their most important function in life.

After Plato one has to wait for the dawn of the modern age until one finds another representative of the political-philosophical tradition who acknowledges female rulers. In terms of degrees of sexism Hobbes can be ranked between Locke and Plato. On the one hand, Hobbes accepted women as rulers and as equal partners in the home more readily than Locke; on the other hand, he did integrate women less in his political system than Plato. One can be more specific since Hobbes mentioned women only three times in the first two parts of the Leviathan, the parts which are generally considered in survey courses of political philosophy. The first time, in the description of weeping and its causes, women are seen as more helpless than men and grouped together with children. The second time, women are combined with strangers both of whom supposedly appreciate and succumb to formal behavior.[41] Only at the third mentioning are women depicted as equal to men in both the public and private spheres. To avoid controversy between the parents over their children, Hobbes suggested a contract which would define maternal and paternal powers. Such an arrangement was unnecessary in case the woman was a reigning queen. She should automatically have more domestic authority than her consort since he was,

after all, her subject.[42] This mentioning of the maternal rights of a female sovereign is the only hint with which Hobbes informs the reader that he might have accepted women's equality in the political sphere. Otherwise he wrote as if only men participated in government.

Contemporary feminist critique of the above philosophers is not difficult to gauge. Liberals are appalled by the paucity of life choices most political theorists held out for women. In the liberal view, occupations should be distributed according to individual merit, not on account of invidious sex distinctions. To support this view, liberals can point to the historical record of both good and bad female and male sovereigns, and likewise to good and bad female and male parents, thus refuting the philosophers' assumption that only men could carry the burden of government and household supervision.

Liberal feminists see an ally in John Stuart Mill, who expressed extensive concern about women's inferior position and wrote a treatise on this issue. Unfortunately, the "Subjection of Women" is omitted in major textbooks on political thought and even in popular collections of Mill's essential works.[43] Mill himself had not always been in favor of equal opportunities. In his first statement on women, marriage, and divorce, which was addressed to his companion and later wife, Harriet Taylor, he was quite progressive in that he denied husbands the right to rule over their wives and pleaded for women to be educated so that they would be financially independent from husbands and fathers. But in the next paragraph he mediated his bold ideas by arguing that retreating to the private sphere and domestic life with

a passive attitude was the "natural" and "healthy" state of affairs for women. Furthermore, with this choice, women would avoid doubling the number of competitors in the labor force. If women had to work, they should look for an occupation which would most partake of the beautiful since women, as a result of their nature, were best suited for education and employment in the fine arts.[44] As will be shown below, in later writing Mill expressed a more egalitarian view of women's nature and pleaded for equal allocation of social values.

Socialist feminists, while agreeing with the liberal critique, go further concerning the demand for occupational choices, individual self-determination, and an egalitarian, compassionate social order. Following Marx's idea of a non-alienated life, they seek the breakdown of work divisions not only along sex-lines, but also along class-lines.[45] In the socialist-feminist view, little is achieved if bourgeois women join bourgeois men in perpetuating a hierarchical, competitive society with unequal economic opportunities. In other words, the liberal-feminist belief that women are capable of greater deeds than they have been allowed to perform in patriarchal societies is only one aspect of the socialist belief that <u>all</u> people have greater potentialities than they can realize under capitalism. To overcome class divisions and exploitation, distinctions between public and private duties, supervisory and supervised tasks, intellectual and manual jobs, rational and emotional relations, self-employed and other-employed work have to be transcended--<u>aufgehoben</u> in the dialectical sense. Work divisions which apparently inhibit the growth of human capabilities should be abolished, while tasks of the opposite nature

should be shared by all people. Not surprisingly, socialist feminists find their value preferences at odds with mainstream political philosophers. They have even challenged Marxist thought because it sees class bias and the profit motive at the roots of unjustified work divisions, while socialist feminists would add sex-bias and the male power motive.[46]

Schematically, the political philosophers discussed so far may be grouped as in Table 1.

Second Assumption: Women's and Men's Proper Nature

The sex-specific assignment of public/private and supervisory/supervised duties, or the lack of it, was based on certain views of the male and female nature. We mentioned such reasoning already in several cases. In Plato's opinion, some women were by nature more public-regarding than some men, and therefore sex per se should not be a criterion for the distribution of rights and duties in the just state. Hobbes regarded the sexes as pretty much equally talented and therefore could accept female sovereigns. Mill, finally, criticized women's inferior position in the home and state since he subscribed to the liberal view of human nature, according to which people have diverse capabilities which should not be stifled by tradition and legal codes. In the "Subjection of Women" he clearly expressed this egalitarian view:

> For, what is the peculiar character of the modern world--the difference which chiefly distinguishes modern institutions, modern social ideas, modern life itself, from those of times long past? It is, that human beings

Table 1: SEX-SEGREGATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DUTIES

Equal rights in:	Political Affairs	
Domestic Affairs	None	Some
None	Aristotle Cicero Aquinas Rosseau Hegel	Montesquieu
Some	Locke Kant	Plato Hobbes Mill Marx

not clear:
Machiavelli
Burke
Arendt

> are no longer born to their place in life, and chained down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to, but are free to employ their faculties, and such favourable chances as offer, to achieve the lot which may appear to them most desirable.[47]

Those philosophers who excluded women from the public sphere and assigned them an inferior position in the home did so on account of their beliefs in inherently different and unequal male and female character traits. Man was regarded as the stronger sex, more rational, courageous, responsible, active, competitive, curious, and independent. Woman was supposed to be weaker, more intuitive, timid, frivolous, passive, supportive, bashful, and dependent. More specifically, in the political theories of Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel involvement in public matters was regarded as morally superior to concern for private affairs. To keep public ethics uncorrupted, women, being deficient in moral discernment, had to be kept in the home below the lofty regions of politics. In other interpretations, for instance in Rousseau, public affairs were thought of as having corrupting influences on people. Women were seen as pure, and to keep them that way they had to be placed on a pedestal above the dirty business of politics. As mentioned above, Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel, were bothered by one contradiction: If women were deficient in ethical judgment, how could they be entrusted with something so precious as (male) children, the future citizens? The theorists solved the problem by arguing that ideally women were intelligent, spiritual, and intuitive enough to understand their husbands' orders.

What feminist criticism can be levelled against those philosophers who regarded women as inferior? In some cases scientific knowledge

has overturned their assumptions. For instance, biological knowledge has disproved Aristotle and Aquinas' argument that the conception of of a girl is an environmental mishap, a theory which supported their view of an unequal female and male nature. Anthropological research has demonstrated that isolated non-Western societies can have different notions about proper masculine and feminine attitudes, which men and women in these societies display accordingly, thus weakening the assumptions by Western thinkers about natural, universal, or God-given sexual distinctions.[48] Along the same line, social psychological research has shown that the Western belief in unique gender traits and the cultural preference for the male sex have influenced child rearing patterns and educational incentives, thus reinforcing sex-specific attitudes and skill levels.[49]

Even if modern knowledge is not taken into consideration, an analysis of inconsistencies within the works of individual philosophers exposes the weakness of some of the sex-related assumptions. Locke, for instance, regarded equality and freedom as important values which were not to be unduly abridged in the state of matrimony. Therefore, disregarding those ecclesiastical and civil marriage regulations of his time which subordinated the wife to her husband in all things, Locke wanted the marriage contract to spell out the rights and duties of each spouse. Furthermore, for the sake of equality, the wife should have full possession of things which were hers by contract. Finally, to ensure equality, father and mother were to have the same parental powers over their children. Note, the philosopher rejected the term "parental power" because it implied wrongly that the father should

have more authority over the children than the mother. But what is Locke's solution when the parents disagree? Since "the last determination, i.e. the rule, should be placed somewhere, it naturally falls to the man's share, as the abler and the stronger."[50] Here, forgetting his own ideals of freedom, equality, and arithmetic justice--a term which will be explained in the next section--Locke reached back to the conservative view of men's and women's unequal nature.

We mentioned already Rousseau's inconsistency in the Origin of the Inequality among Mankind where he relegated women to an inferior, private position in civic society, while seemingly acknowledging women's equality or even superiority in the natural state.

Third Assumption: Sex-Specific Allocation of Social Values

As the discussion so far has indicated, beliefs in women's inferior or equal nature justified proposing political orders which would have distributed social goods, such as education, occupational choices, creative freedom, financial security, and public duties, in an uneven or egalitarian way. These justifications can be systematized in terms of various theories of justice. In general, political philosophers tied the rendering of justice, that is, the question of who should get what, to their view on unequal or equal human abilities, that is, to the question of who contributes what to society. Four principles of justice emerged from this conjunction. We will first summarize their general characteristics, then describe their historical appearance in political thought, and finally, in the following section, apply them to the present political practice in the United States.

The first principle, distributive or proportionate justice, reflects the conservative belief that citizens have innately unequal abilities. Justice is served when individuals who can contribute more to the public well-being are given a chance to do so and in return receive more from the public. The second principle, arithmetic or numerical justice, is based on the liberal notion that citizens are basically equal and therefore should more or less equally partake in the enjoyment of social rights and responsibilities. A third principle, pragmatic or utilitarian justice, argues more in historical and less in universal terms. People are thought to be equal with equal rights to social goods. However, it is regarded as just to treat people differently when social expediency demands it. Finally, a fourth principle, redistributive or corrective justice, comes into play when one of the other three principles is violated and the perceived wrong requires correction.

Both Plato and Aristotle distinguished between distributive and arithmetic justice to account for the unequal political treatment of people in an aristocracy and the egalitarian treatment of citizens in a democracy. Under ideal conditions they favored a mixed application of both principles. People should be assigned unequal public or private rights and duties proportionate to their unequal abilities. On the other hand, individuals with similar capabilities should receive similar responsibilities and privileges. Since the two philosophers disagreed about female capabilities, their blueprints for a just community differed. Plato drew up a constitution for a tripartite class society with women in each class proportionate to their abilities.

Aristotle preferred a sex-segregated political order--since women were inherently inferior to men, they naturally contributed less to society and deserved less from society.[51]

Modern liberal thought, believing in the basic equality among all people, has dropped the notion of proportionate justice in favor of arithmetic justice. In Locke's words, rights and duties among citizens should be distributed according to one legal code, "not to be varied in particular cases, but to have one rule for rich and poor, for the favorite at Court, and the countryman at plough."[52] As mentioned above, this view of human nature and justice had profound implications on Locke's assignment of property and parental rights to the marriage partners.

Mill promoted the principle of pragmatic justice. In his view,

> all persons are deemed to have a <u>right</u> to equality of treatment, except when some recognized social expediency requires the reverse. And hence all social inequalities which have ceased to be considered expedient, assume the character not of simple inexpediency, but of injustice . . . . [53]

Amid the history of social improvements, through which matters of primary social necessity passed into the ranks of stigmatized injustice, he mentioned distinctions based on sex.[54] In the "Subjection of Women" Mill repeated his view of justice as it applied to women.

> The least that can be demanded is, that the woman question should not be considered as prejudged by existing opinion, but open to discussion on its merits, as a question of <u>justice and expediency</u>: the decision on this, as on any other social arrangements of mankind, depending on what an enlightened estimate of tendencies and consequences may show to be most <u>advantageous to humanity</u> in general, without distinction of sex.[55] (emphasis added)

The concept of corrective justice is used by Aristotle to defend the power of judges to redistribute social goods among citizens.[56] This principle has become important again in recent affirmative action cases and will be discussed in the next section.

The Three Assumptions in Contemporary Political Practice

Actually, all four forms of justice with their different views of human nature and task assignments are relevant in interpreting present governmental decisions in the United States vis-à-vis women. Distributive justice with sex-discriminatory consequences manifests itself in the different treatment of people who perform, or have performed, military and mothering functions. Until recently women were excluded from most military units. They were thought to lack the strength and aggressiveness needed in war. They were to serve their country by working in civilian jobs and in the home. However, this female contribution to society has been treated as inferior to the soldier's service and granted fewer privileges. Soldiers, in distinction to homemakers, are paid and veterans are entitled to special G.I. benefits, such as pensions, health care, college stipends, home loans, and job preferences. Only when mothers are impoverished, are they entitled to some of these benefits.

Another example of distributive justice and the inferior treatment of female tasks is the different governmental support of producers and consumers. Although the woman's role as domestic consumer is supposedly as honorable as the man's role as social producer, governmental resource allocation is heavily tilted in favor of the latter. Publicly funded universities train business administrators and marketing experts in

sophisticated techniques that overwhelm the educational efforts of home economics. Much of the work of the Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, and State Departments is intended to make the domestic and foreign markets transparent for producers, who in return can use their knowledge and financial power to obfuscate the market for consumers. A bill to establish an autonomous Agency for Consumer Protection has repeatedly been stalled in Congress. Even if such an Agency is finally set up, it is unlikely that it will receive sufficient financial support to enable it to make up for past neglect and to stand up against the entrenched interests in the other governmental agencies. If, as one might well argue, private consumption is an activity inferior to social production it should not be assigned mostly to women.

The principle of arithmetic justice has been endorsed by liberal feminists because it seems to be sex-blind. However, by totally ignoring physiological differences, this principle can be used to make it difficult for women to combine non-domestic work with the mothering role. In 1976 the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in the now famous case General Electric Co. v. Gilbert et al. that the exclusion of pregnancy from the employer's insurance policy was not gender-based discrimination according to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Following the principle of arithmetic justice, the Court argued that a disability benefits program did not have to be all-inclusive; but what it included, such as, prostatectomies, vasectomies, and circumcision, had to be granted uniformly to women and men.[57]

Congress, upset with this ruling, moved swiftly to pass a bill

to redefine sex discrimination in the 1964 Act. The Senate Human Resources Committee in charge of the bill maintained that employers should treat pregnancy the same as other disabling conditions in fringe benefit programs. The Committee also based its argument on the notion of arithmetic justice, but in a more flexible way. Accepting the fact that women and men have different, but equally disabling conditions, they insisted that equal justice could be rendered to both social groups by allocating the same benefits to different, but equivalent, disabilities.[58]

Neither in the ruling of the Court nor in the opposing view of Congress can an indication be found that the principle of pragmatic or utilitarian justice entered into their considerations. Neither branch of government seems to have thought about the long-range social advantages of their respective allocation of social values. The pragmatic implication of the Court decision is that society will best benefit if fewer children are born and only to women who are homemakers and who can secure financial support for their domestic occupation either from government or a husband. The pragmatic implication of the Congressional bill, on the other hand, is that society will best benefit if mothers can provide for themselves and their children through their own non-domestic work.

Redistributive or corrective justice, as the name implies, is the principle through which liberal women (and of course minorities) try to obtain preferrential consideration in the allocation of social goods. They point out that past sex-discrimination and socialization held women back. To catch up with men, women should receive special

governmental support. The goal would be arithmetic justice and the egalitarian distribution of social privileges and burdens in the long run. In the socialist-feminist view, any redistributive effort should not simply look at men and women per se, but at the rich and poor in general, although female needs should receive special attention.

Final Remarks

The schematic overview of sexism in political philosophy began with Aristotle. Ironically, the application of the framework in support of feminism concludes with Aristotelian principles of justice. This irony points out the need for a dialectical approach to political thought: Ideas which contradict emerging value preferences have to be critically reevaluated, while ideas with the opposite effect should be promoted. With this paper we hope to have contributed to this process.

NOTES

1. Cf., e.g., Christine Pierce, "Equality: Republic V," The Monist 57 (January 1973), pp. 1-11; Dorothea Wender, "Plato: Misogynist, Paedophile, and Feminist," Arethusa 6 (Spring 1973), pp. 75-90; Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato," Political Theory 4 (May 1976), pp. 195-212; Christine Garside Allen, "Plato on Women," Feminist Studies 2 (No. 2/3, 1975), pp. 131-138; Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979) (Okin analyzes Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Mill); and Julia Annas, "Mill and the Subjection of Women," Philosophy 52 (April 1977), pp. 179-94.

2. Cf., e.g., Jean B. Elshtain, "Moral Woman and Immoral Man: A Consideration of the Public-Private Split and Its Political Ramifications," Politics and Society 5 (1974), pp. 453-73; Lynda Lange, "Reproduction in Democratic Theory," in Contemporary Issues in Political Philosophy, eds. William R. Shea and John King-Farlow (New York: Science History Publications, 1976); and Mary Lyndon Shanley, "Marriage Contract and Social Contract in Seventeenth Century English Political Thought," Western Political Quarterly 32 (March 1979), pp. 79-91.

3. Books which come closest to our effort are Rosemary Agonito, History of Ideas on Women. A Source Book (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977); and Alison M. Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg Struhl, Feminist Frameworks. Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women

and Men (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978). However, these books do not have an exclusively political-philosophical focus.

4. Aristotle Politics Bk. I. Concerning the husband's right to rule over his wife, cf. specifically chs. ii. 12 and v. 2. Concerning the priority of the state over the family, cf. ch. i. 1; 9; and 11. Concerning the use of slaves for necessary physical work, cf. chs. i. 4; ii. 14; ii. 23; iii. 23; and v. 9.

5. Ibid., Bk I. i. 8.

6. Aristotle Generation of Animals Bk. II. i. 732a; and Bk. IV. vi. 775a15.

7. Aristotle Politics Bk. I. i. 4. For a summary of the incidences where Aristotle refers to the female sex, cf. Stephen R. L. Clark, Aristotle's Man. Speculations upon Aristotelian Anthropology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 206-11.

8. Cicero On the Commonwealth. Translated with notes and introduction by George H. Sabine and Stanley B. Smith (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1929), p. 260. (Cicero The Republic Bk. VI. xvi.)

9. Ibid., Bk. I. xiii; and Bk. II. xxxiv. On Duties Bk. I. xvii. 54.

10. Cicero The Republic Bk. I. xliii.

11. Ibid., Bk. III. xxiv. Cf. also Sabine and Smith, Introduction to Cicero On the Commonwealth, pp. 53-54.

12. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, vol. 13 (New York: Blackfriars, McGraw-Hill Book Co. and London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963), pp. 35-37 (Ia, Ques. 92, Art. 1).

13. Ibid., p. 37.

14. Ibid., p. 39.

15. Thomas Aquinas, Selected Political Writings, ed. A. P. D'Entrèves trans. J. G. Dawson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), pp. 3, and 75.

16. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Mankind, ed. and with an introduction by Lester G. Crocker (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), pp. 171, 193, 204, and 212.

17. Ibid., p. 205.

18. Ibid., pp. 163-64.

19. Ibid., pp. 8 and 12.

20. Georg W. F. Hegel, Werke, vol. 8: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, ed. Eduard Gans, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1854), pp. 216-39 (par. 158-180).

21. Ibid., pp. 112-13 (par. 75). Cf. also Shlomo Avineri, Hegel's Theory of the Modern State (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 139.

22. Hegel's Philosophy of Right, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942; reprint ed. 1958), p. 114. Gans' edition of Hegel's works contains additions from Hegel's lecture notes. The following statement is added to paragraph 166:

> Women may be educated, but they are not made for the higher forms of academic disciplines, for philosophy, and for certain productions of art, which demand generality. Women may have insights, taste, delicacy, but they do not have the ideal. The difference between man and woman is that of the animal and the plant: the animal conforms to the character of plant, the plant more to the character of woman, since she is more of the calm unfolding, which maintains the indeterminate unity of sensibility as its principle. When women occupy the pinnacle of government, the state is in danger, since they do not act according to the requirement of generality, but according to incidental inclination and opinion. The education of women happens,

one does not know how, so to say, through the atmosphere of imagination, more through life than through the acquisition of knowledge, whereas man obtains his position only through the conquest of thought and through many technical endeavors. Hegel, Philosophie des Rechts, pp. 225-26 (par. 166). (Translation mine, emphasis added)

23. Ibid., pp. 114-17.

24. Ibid., p. 160.

25. Montesquieu The Spirit of the Laws, bk. VII, ch. 17.

26. John Locke, "An Essay Concerning the True, Original, Extent and End of Civil Government," in Social Contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau, with an introduction by Ernest Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 30-31 and 47-48 (II, 52; and II, 82).

27. Carl Friedrich, The Philosophy of Law in Historical Perspective, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1963), p. 129.

28. Ernst Cassirer, gen. ed., Immanuel Kants Werke, vol. 7: Die Metaphysik der Sitten, ed. Benzion Kellermann (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1916), pp. 120-21 (par. 46).

29. Ibid., pp. 82-83 (par. 26).

30. Kant's view of justice has been revived by John Rawls. He calls the principle "justice as fairness." A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, Mass.: Belnap Press, 1971), p. 15.

31. Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), p. 27.

32. Ibid., pp. 45-53, 155-223, et al.

33. Ibid., p. 38.

34. Ibid., pp. 72-117, 119-53, et al.

35. Ibid., pp. 29, 64, 313, and 321. On the other hand, the terms "family" and "household" appear quite often, but generally in connection

with man's condition; and these terms are not considered important enough to be indexed. In Arendt's other writings, women do not fare better.

36. Plato The Republic, trans, with introduction and notes by Francis MacDonald Cornfold (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 103 and 108.

37. Plato The Republic, Bk. III. 414.

38. Ibid., Bk. V. 455; and 459-61.

39. Ibid., Bks. II. 387; III. 395; IV. 431; V. 469; X. 605.

40. To the first group of scholars belong Pierce, "Equality: Republic V" and Wender, "Plato: Misogynist, Paedophile, and Feminist." In the second group fit, of course, Lew Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), pp. 116-19; and Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato."

41. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Part I and II, with an introduction by Herbert W. Schneider (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958), pp. 58 and 79.

42. Ibid., pp. 164-65.

43. "The Subjection of Women" is, for example, not included in Henry M. Magid, "John Stuart Mill," in History of Political Philosophy, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1972), pp. 737-54; Cameron McDonald, Western Political Theory: The Modern Age (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962); Gertrude Himmelfarb, ed., Essays on Politics and Culture by John Stuart Mill (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1963); and Max Lerner, ed., Essential Works of John Stuart Mill (New York: Bantam Books, 1961). For a critical analysis of Mill's

essay, cf. Annas, "Mill and the Subjection of Women."

44. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, "Early Essays on Marriage and Divorce (1832)," in Essays on Sex Equality, ed. Alice S. Rossi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 68, 74-77. For an example of the liberal-feminist solution to sex discrimination, cf. Alice S. Rossi, "Equality Between the Sexes: An Immodest Proposal," in The Women in America, ed. Robert Jay Lifton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 98-143.

45. Karl Marx, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. Dirk J. Struik, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), pp. 106-19. Cf. also Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1968); and Bertell Ollman, Alienation. Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

46. Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 75-81; and Barbara S. Deckard, The Women's Movement: Political, Socio-economic, and Psychological Issues (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 414-19.

47. Mill, "Subjection of Women," pp. 142-143.

48. Margaret Mead, Male and Female. A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968).

49. So much research has been conducted on sex-specific socialization that the reader has to be referred to a comprehensive secondary source. Cf. Eleanor Emmons Maccoby and Carol Nagy Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974).

50. Locke, "An Essay," pp. 47-48 (par. II, 82).

51. Plato Laws Bks. V. 744b-c; and VI. 757a-758a; and Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics V. Cf. also Ernest Barker, The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle (New York: Russell & Russell, 1959), p. 12; and Friedrich, Philosophy of Law, p. 21.

52. Locke, "An Essay," p. 84 (II, 142).

53. Mill, "Utilitarianism," in Essential Works, ed. Lerner, p. 247.

54. Ibid., pp. 247-48.

55. Mill, "Subjection of Women," p. 147.

56. Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Bk. V. 1131b25-1132b20. Cf. also Friedrich, Philosophy of Law, pp. 21-22, 192.

57. General Electric Co. v. Gilbert et al., Supreme Court of the United States, 74-1589, 74-1590, Dec. 7, 1976. Earlier examples of Supreme Court decisions based on the sexist principle of distributive justice are discussed by Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Ideology and the Law: Sexism and Supreme Court Decisions," in Women in Politics, ed. Jane S. Jaquette (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), pp. 131-53.

58. "Committee Acts to Reverse Pregnancy Disability Ruling," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 35 (August 6, 1977), p. 1647.